

The Wheel Watch

a newsletter of the
Fishing Vessel Owners' Association
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Vol. XV, No. 5

August 2001

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This mid-summer newsletter will bring you up-to-date on actions of the North Pacific Council, Pacific Council, and Washington, D.C. issues.

****North Pacific Council****

Charter Boat IFQ's. At the direction of Governor Tony Knowles, Kevin Duffy, Council voting member from the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, decided to reopen the public record before voting on a motion to rescind the Council's Halibut Charter Individual Fishing Quota Plan. This will take place at the October 1st meeting in Seattle. If Kevin Duffy is successful and his motion cancels the IFQ plan amendment, then the Guideline Harvest Level adopted in 2000 would control allocations between charter boats and the commercial industry. A good share of the charter folks are in opposition to the GHL, as well, and it has not left Juneau for approval in D.C. The GHL is politically suspect if the Charter IFQ amendment does not go forward.

The motion to rescind came at the June Council meeting shortly after Senator Stevens rebuffed Governor Knowles request to have Senator Stevens oppose the IFQ amendment. In a letter to Governor Knowles, Senator Stevens said:

“I established a policy here in the Senate of not interfering in Council actions. My involvement as a Federal official in Council decisions would defeat the very purpose of regional management. As a former Council member, I hope you appreciate my position.”

Governor Knowles was on the Council in 1988. Governor Knowles appointed two new Council members recently. They will replace Kevin O'Leary and Linda Behnken, both previous supporters of the Charter IFQ program. The original vote was 8 to 3 in support of the amendment. It is unknown how Stosh Andersen, a small boat operator from Kodiak, or Stephanie Madsen, a shorebased processor representative, will vote on this reconsideration vote. Governor Tony Knowles has asked the Commerce Department to reject the Council's plan. It should be noted that from this point forward, Governor Knowles will no longer have the clout on the Council he once did as **all** Alaskan Council members will start to focus on who the next Governor of Alaska will be for their re-appointments. This could be a factor in the voting at the October Council meeting.

Community Purchase of Quota Share. The Council reviewed a discussion paper provided by staff based on a proposal by the Gulf Coastal Communities Coalition to allow small, rural, Gulf of Alaska communities to hold IPHC Area 2C, 3A, and

3B commercial halibut and Gulf of Alaska sablefish quota share (QS) to be leased to community members.

The Council initiated an analysis of changes to the current regulations that would allow communities to hold commercial halibut and sablefish QS, with initial review scheduled for December 2001. The Council's problem statement stated:

The number of small coastal communities in Southeast and South central Alaska are struggling to remain economically viable. The halibut and sablefish IFQ program, as with other limited entry programs, increase the cost of entry into or expansion in the commercial halibut and sablefish fisheries.

Allowing qualifying communities to purchase halibut and sablefish quota share for lease to and use by community residents will help minimize adverse economic impacts on these small, remote, coastal communities in Southeast and South central Alaska, and help provide for the sustained participation of these communities in the halibut and sablefish IFQ fisheries.

The discussion paper on the community buy-in is posted on the NPFMC website.

Albatross and Seabirds (some good news). Scientist, Dr. Hasegawa of Japan, reported that the Short-tail Albatross population in the Sen Kaku Islands was now at 200 birds (174 adults and 24 chicks), up from 7 in 1987-88. Also the population on Torishima was up to 1300 with a breeding success of 73% (238 pairs nested). At the October Council meeting, proposals on tori lines, weighting of gear, etc., will be presented. As of July, I have only heard from Arnold Jardstrom, F/V Keltie, on different options you might want to have analyzed, such as, no weighting, two tori lines, one tori line, etc. The U. of W. researchers will probably support an option for at least two tori lines. Author, Bill McCloskey, went on the F/V Vansee during a sablefish trip last month and in an article that appeared in the Anchorage Daily, he reported no birds were taken and the Vansee's single tori line was working well. Thanks to Per and his crew on the Vansee.

Pat McBride, F/V Judi B, is entertaining a French film crew who are looking at bird interactions this month. Pat uses a double tori line system.

****Pacific Council****

Limited Entry Fixed Gear Sablefish Permit Stacking and Season for 2001 and Beyond. The Council was advised by NMFS that the basic provisions of the

Permit Stacking Program will be in place for the 2001 season, and the season is expected to begin August 15 and close October 31. This is still the goal as of late July.

Incidental Pacific Halibut Harvest Restrictions for the Primary, Limited Entry Longline Sablefish Fishery North of Point Chehalis, Washington. The Council adopted an allowance for the retention of incidentally caught halibut in the primary 2001 limited entry sablefish longline fishery north of Point Chehalis, Washington. This allowance is as follows:

Properly licensed vessels may return and land 80 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut for every 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish landed and up to two additional halibut in excess of the 80 pounds per 1,000 pound ratio per landing. Each properly licensed vessel is restricted to a primary sablefish season cumulative landing limit of:

Tier 1: 2,850 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut;

Tier 2: 1,300 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut;

Tier 3: 750 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut.

Season cumulative limits apply to individual vessels regardless of the number of permits stacked on the vessel. **In other words, you can't land more halibut by having more permits on board.**

I would like to thank John Crowley for his efforts at the Pacific Council meeting. He testified on behalf of the F/V Sea Angels's permit, stacking, and the halibut harvest. No one else from Washington was present to carry the ball.

****Washington, D.C.****

There are more Magnuson Act bills being proposed than I have every seen. It is unlikely that Washington, D.C. will move on Magnuson Act issues until the fall of 2002. None of the proposals attack the existing IFQ program. There are several bills on Mercury and emission standards for energy companies interestingly from land-locked congressional types. Everyone seems to want to out do the other on enviro issues. Perhaps to slow down some of the heartland political concerns for our fisheries, we should ask for land reserves running through every corn and wheat field so the antelope and buffaloes can roam again, similar to the Marine Reserves being proposed. Perhaps we should start asking just what are they putting in America's dirt? Are we eating it? Iowa's Senator is concerned about mercury in fish, what's in the damned dirt?

Senator Murkowski. Lots of rumors in D.C. that he will run for the Governorship of Alaska in 2002.

****Markets****

Halibut. FVOA boats reported recently, depending on sizes, prices of \$1.70 - \$1.95 in Dutch and \$2.00 to \$2.40 in Seward. Deliveries have slowed up. About 60% of the quota is in. Prices have firmed up over the last four weeks. I expect this trend to continue through the early fall. Inventories through June are at the same level as last year, at 4,965,000 pounds.

Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Allocations and Landings

From 15-MAR-01 through 26-July-01

|----- TAC -----|

Area	Species	Vessel Landings	Total Catch Pounds	Allocation Pounds	Remaining Pounds	Percent Landed
2C	halibut	1,708	5,326,779	8,780,000	3,453,221	61
3A	halibut	1,915	14,086,899	21,890,000	7,803,101	64
3B	halibut	553	8,829,353	16,530,000	7,700,647	53
4A	halibut	188	1,971,094	4,970,000	2,998,906	40
4B	halibut	111	1,639,189	3,928,000	2,288,811	42
4C	halibut	52	255,660	1,015,000	759,340	25
4D	halibut	16	442,151	1,421,000	978,849	31
4E	halibut	0	0	0	0	0
Total		4,543	32,551,125	58,534,000	25,982,875	56
AI	sablefish	67	880,073	3,306,900	2,426,827	27
BS	sablefish	69	423,336	1,375,670	952,334	31
CG	sablefish	549	7,786,039	9,541,509	1,755,470	82
SE	sablefish	545	4,674,059	7,407,456	2,733,397	63
WG	sablefish	106	2,340,970	3,544,997	1,204,027	66
WY	sablefish	252	3,150,369	3,944,029	793,660	80
Total		1,588	19,254,846	29,120,561	17,861,766	66

****Second Watch****

Eco-labeling. FVOA attempted to secure an eco label for halibut and sablefish last year and will renew those efforts this fall. We have run into some resistance to eco-labeling from a U.S. fish processor. We did get a positive pre-assessment on green labeling from the eco-labeling people. Alaskan salmon is now eco-labeled and Whole Foods Market is promoting it. Midwater Pollock could be eco-labeled as well as Chilean whiting.

Non-resident Fishing Fees in Alaska. The state of Alaska has issued a notice indicating Alaska may owe non-residents a refund with interest on fees paid after December 13, 1984, such as your interim use permits. If you have questions, contact plaintiff's attorney, Loren Domke at (907) 790-3442. Non-residents have been paying three times the resident fee for fishing in federal and state waters. Federal Courts have said that this is a violation of the interstate commerce provisions of the U.S. Constitution.

Japan. The number of workers in the Japanese fishing sector has decreased from 626,000 in 1963 to 277,000 in 1998. By contrast, imports of fish showed an increase from 1,940,000 Mt., in 1984 to 5,730,000 Mt., in 1999 (JFA).

Organic Quote.

“What do you think of when you hear the term “organic”? Natural. Safe, Healthy. Of course! That's why it's surprising and disappointing that a federal advisory group wants the U.S. government to declare that wild fish cannot be labeled “organic”. What could be more natural, more healthy or more safe?” ...Fran Ulmer, Lieutenant Governor, Alaska.

Membership.

Please welcome **Jim Norris with Marine Resources Consultants**, Port Townsend, Washington, as a new Sustaining Sponsor. Thank you for your support!

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****Calendar of Events****

Sept. 5-10, 2001	North Pacific Council Meeting	Convention Center, Centennial Hall Sitka, AK
Week of Sept. 10, 2001	Pacific Council Meeting	Doubletree Hotel - Columbia River Portland, OR
September 15, 2001	13 th Annual Fishermen's Fall Festival	Fishermen's Terminal Seattle, WA
Week of Oct. 1, 2001	North Pacific Council Meeting	Doubletree Hotel - Airport Seattle, WA
Oct. 29-Nov. 2, 2001	Pacific Council Meeting	Park Plaza International Hotel San Francisco, CA
Week of Dec. 3, 2001	North Pacific Council Meeting	Anchorage Hilton Anchorage, AK

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